REMARKS

I. Amendments

A. To The Claims

The amended claim finds support in the claims as filed and in the specification, as set forth below.

The present invention, as embodied in claim 25, is directed to an isolated protein encoded by an open reading frame (ORF) in a hepatitis E virus (HEV) genome. Support for these elements can be found, for example, on page 42, lines 12-14. The elements in steps (a) and (b) in claim 25 are disclosed, for example, on page 60, lines 21-24, and page 55, lines 30-32. Support for claims 26, 32, 36 and 40 can also be found at least on page 55, lines 30-32. Support for the limitation found in claims 27, 33, 37 and 41 can be found at least on page 47, lines 13-15. Support for the limitations in the remaining claims can be found in the Sequence Listing.

No new matter is added by way of this amendment.

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

In the Claims:

Claims 1-24 have been cancelled, and claims 25-41 have been added.

25. (New) An isolated protein encoded by an open reading frame (ORF) in a hepatitis E virus (HEV) genome, said protein prepared by

(a) introducing into a host cell an expression vector comprising a polynucleotide sequence that is greater than 70% identical with the sequence presented as SEQ ID NO:6; and

(b) expressing said protein.

26. (New) The protein of claim 25, wherein said expression vector is a viral expression vector.

27. (New) The protein of claim 25, wherein said protein is a fragment of said isolated protein having a length of at least about 30 amino acids.

28. (New) The protein of claim 25, wherein said genome has the sequence presented as SEQ ID NO:6.

29. (New) The protein of claim 25, wherein said genome has the sequence presented as SEQ ID NO:10.

30. (New) The protein of claim 25, wherein said open reading frame is the first open reading frame (ORF1) of said HEV genome.

31. (New) The protein of claim 30, wherein said protein has the sequence presented as SEQ ID NO:7.

32. (New) The protein of claim 30, wherein said expression vector is a viral expression vector.

33. (New) The protein of claim 32, wherein said protein is a fragment of said isolated protein having a length of at least about 30 amino acids.

34. (New) The protein of claim 25, wherein said open reading frame is the second open reading frame (ORF2) of said HEV genome.

35. (New) The protein of claim 34, wherein said protein has the sequence presented as SEQ ID NO:8.

36. (New) The protein of claim 34, wherein said expression vector is a viral expression vector.

37. (New) The protein of claim 36, wherein said protein is a fragment of said isolated protein having a length of at least about 30 amino acids.

38. (New) The protein of claim 25, wherein said open reading frame is the third open reading frame (ORF3) of said HEV genome.

39. (New) The protein of claim 38, wherein said protein has the sequence presented as SEQ ID NO:9.

40. (New) The protein of claim 38, wherein said expression vector is a viral expression vector.

41. (New) The protein of claim 39, wherein said protein is a fragment of said isolated protein having a length of at least about 30 amino acids.